

Ashfield cum Thorpe Parish Council

Approved Minutes of the Council Meeting held on Wednesday 13 September 2017 at 7.30pm at the Village Hall, The Street, Ashfield cum Thorpe

Present: Cllr Myles Hansen (Chair), Cllr Simon Garrett (Vice-Chair), Cllr Robert Grimsey, Cllr Ruth Hart, Cllr Geoff Hazlewood, Cllr Ann Langley and Cllr Paul Whayman (Incoming Co-Opted Member)

Attendance: Cllr Matthew Hicks (District & County Councillor) and Simon Ashton (Parish Clerk)

1. **Apologies and Approval of Absences**

There were no apologies received as all Members were present at the meeting.

2. **Declarations of Pecuniary or Non-Pecuniary Interests by Members**

There were no interests declared by any of the Councillors.

3. **Approval of Minutes of the Previous Meeting on 26 June 2017**

Minutes of the previous meeting of the Parish Council on 26 June 2017 were received, approved as a true record and signed by the Chair.

4. **Co-Option of a New Member and Signing of the Declaration of Acceptance**

Approval of the co-option of Paul Whayman as a Member, subject to any further checks advised by MSDC by the Parish Clerk, was proposed by Cllr Hansen, seconded by Cllr Garrett and agreed by Members. Cllr Whayman signed a declaration of acceptance form and was requested to provide a completed register of interests form in time for the next meeting.

5. **Reports by the District Councillor and County Councillor**

Cllr Hicks delivered his report at the meeting. A copy of the report has been made available at the end of these minutes for information.

6. **Contributions by Members of the Public**

There were no issues raised by members of the public.

7. **Purchase of Defibrillator for the Village Hall**

Cllr Hansen, Cllr Garrett, Cllr Hart and Cllr Langley had attended a meeting of Ashfield Community Council on 5 September 2017. It was agreed that the Community Council would consent to have equipment mounted on the exterior of the village hall, it would not pay any purchase, installation or ongoing costs and Simon Garrett would apply for a grant on behalf of the Community Council for the purchase of the defibrillator and related training costs.

It was also agreed that Cllr Hart would provide him with a copy of the funding application form previously completed by the Parish Clerk for appropriate correction and final submission to the Big Lottery Fund as soon as possible.

8. Consideration of the Installation of Vehicle Activated Signs

Members agreed to postpone the consideration of the installation of vehicle activated signs until the next meeting planned to take place on 13 December 2017.

9. Replacement and Relocation of Notice Board

Cllr Grimsey had relocated the new notice board to the site of the original notice board immediately outside the village hall. Members acknowledged their appreciation. An invoice was received for payment at the next meeting. Following the receipt of a key, Cllr Garrett agreed to display official notices in the future at the request of the Parish Clerk.

10. Consideration of Planning Applications and Decision Notices

(a) MSDC 0681/17: Application Granted (11 July 2017)

Pear Tree Farm, The Street, Ashfield cum Thorpe, IP14 6NA

Members noted the outcome of this planning application.

11. Finance

(a) Cashbook, income, expenditure and budget reports of activity to the end of August 2017 were reviewed and noted.

(b) Approval of the bank reconciliation of activity to the end of August 2017 was proposed by Cllr Hansen, seconded by Cllr Hart and agreed by Members.

(c) The receipt of a VAT refund for £114.60 on 10 July 2017 (March 2015 to March 2017) was noted.

(d) Payments were authorised in favour of the Parish Clerk's wages (£447.70) and office and personal expenses (£69.30). A payment was also authorised in favour of Business Services at CAS Ltd for insurance cover 2017/18 (£201.60). Approval of these payments was proposed by Cllr Hazlewood, seconded by Cllr Garrett and agreed by Members. The Parish Clerk agreed to provide confirmation of the cheque signatories at the next meeting.

(e) The conclusion of the exercise of public rights of access to final accounts on 10 August 2017 was noted.

(f) The outstanding conclusion of the external audit of the annual accounts 2016/17 was noted.

(g) The Parish Clerk confirmed that the application for Transparency Code funding, reduced to maximum of £568.17 to take newly obtained quoted prices into account, had been submitted to NALC by SALC on 7 August 2017. However, SALC confirmed on 6 September 2017 that the submission had not been acknowledged by NALC for consideration at its meeting at the end of August 2017. SALC confirmed that a further submission to NALC would therefore be made for its consideration at its meeting at the end of September 2017.

(h) Approval of the Parish Clerk's salary scale of SCP19 from 12 October 2017 was proposed by Cllr Hansen, seconded by Cllr Grimsey and agreed by Members.

(i) The MSDC indicated costs for a Parish Council election of about £10/elector were noted.

12. Governance

(a) Following a review of the risks, approval of the adoption of the annual risk assessment for 2017/18 prepared by the Parish Clerk, subject to an amendment making reference to backup copies, was proposed by Cllr Hansen, seconded by Cllr Garrett and agreed by Members.

(b) Following a review of the risks, approval of the insurance cover prepared by Community Action Suffolk for 2017/18 was agreed by Members.

(c) Approval for the Parish Clerk to attend a General Data Protection Regulations training course was agreed by Members.

13. Consideration of the Babergh & Mid Suffolk Joint Local Plan Consultation

Cllr Hansen and Cllr Garrett discussed the issues arising following their attendance at the MSDC joint local plan consultation meeting hosted by Ashfield Community Council on 4 September 2017 at which time the stages of the consultation process were discussed.

14. Matters for Future Consideration

Members agreed to include the review and approval of the budget and precept for 2018/19 and Standing Orders, Financial Regulations and Code of Conduct at the next meeting planned to take place on 13 December 2017. The meeting finished at 9.20pm.

15. Dates of the Next Meetings

(a) 13 December 2017

(b) 14 March 2018

Simon Ashton, Parish Clerk

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13 December 2017

September 2017 report for the Thredling Division from Cllr Matthew Hicks

Suffolk students celebrate as GCSE results continue to rise

Self-reported statistics from Suffolk schools recently released show that more students in Suffolk have achieved expected levels of GCSE attainment in English and Maths this year. This year, there has been a change to the way that English and Maths GCSEs are graded. Results are now graded from 9 to 1, (previously A to G) with 9 being the highest and 1 being the lowest. The expected standard for pupils to achieve is now a grade 4 and above (previously a C grade and above), with grade 5 considered a 'strong pass'. These changes will be phased in to cover all subjects by 2020. More than 7,000 students in Suffolk were entered for GCSE results. According to provisional results collated from around 80% of schools in Suffolk, 63% of students achieved a grade 4 and above in English and Maths this year. The figures suggest more than 2% more students have achieved the expected standard for English and Maths, compared with last year. Some schools have made significant gains compared to last year:

Ormiston Denes Academy: 20% increase to 53% of pupils achieving the threshold for English and Maths.

Holbrook Academy: 15% increase to 88% of pupils achieving the threshold for English and Maths.

Stowmarket High School: 15% increase to 60% of pupils achieving the threshold for English and Maths.

The self-reported figures also show a significant increase in the number of disadvantaged pupils achieving the threshold measure in English and Maths. Approximately 6% more students in Suffolk achieved this measure this year compared to last year.

More students in Suffolk pass A level exams than across the country

Provisional A level figures show that Suffolk pupils have once again performed well with the number of A*-E grades awarded above the national average. Almost 3,000 pupils were entered for A Levels in Suffolk. Although yet to be verified, the figures show that 98.2% of A levels taken in the county have been awarded an A*- E grade, compared with 97.9% nationally. 77% of A level grades achieved were within the A*- C bracket, in line with national figures and a 1% increase on last year's results. Pass rates remain high across the county, with St Benedict's Catholic School and Newmarket Academy both reporting a 100% pass rate (A*-E grade achieved). Students at Sir John Leman High School made a significant 11% gain in the number of A*-C grades awarded this year, increasing from 71% to 82%.

Energy Efficiency grants now available for local retail businesses in Suffolk

Recent changes to European funding rules mean that retail businesses across Suffolk can access grants for energy efficiency measures. Suffolk County Council is collaborating with Norfolk County Council to use EU funding to support businesses from a range of sectors. A number of shops have already benefitted from free and independent advice and a change in the funding regulations means that shops can now also access grants towards the capital costs of any energy saving measure. The Carbon Trust calculate that taking 20 per cent off the energy spend of any business is equivalent to a 5 per cent increase in sales. One of the businesses already benefitting from the scheme, is Clickers Archery in Norfolk. Owner Graham Harris said: "Business Energy Efficiency Anglia's help has enabled us to reach our long-term goal of carbon saving in a shorter period of time. It would have taken us a few years to generate the funding ourselves but receiving the grant funding through BEE Anglia has accelerated that process." Grants are available for up to a maximum of £20,000, with a minimum of £1,000 for those businesses which take part in the scheme. To date, the Business Energy Efficiency Anglia (BEE Anglia) project has reviewed 371 organisations in Suffolk and Norfolk (156 in Suffolk), identifying cost savings of £2.26m (which equates to £6,146 per business), and carbon savings of 22,371 tonnes (61 tonnes per business). These savings are equivalent to the carbon used in 6,648 flights from London to Sydney. This initiative is not just about identifying savings. BEE Anglia has so far awarded over £118,000 in grant funding for various energy efficiency projects in Suffolk including radiant heating, vehicle tracking, wood burners and more efficient lighting. The BEE Anglia project is funded by the European Regional Development Fund and is being delivered across the region through a partnership of Suffolk County Council, Norfolk County Council, Groundwork and NWES. The project has three core offers that have been designed to help businesses reduce carbon and save money using independent advice. Energy experts will visit the business' premises to conduct a free, impartial and independent review that identifies the best cost and carbon saving opportunities. Businesses interested in any aspect of this service can find out more and register online at www.beeanglia.org or call Groundwork on 01473 350370. Dedicated advisors will be able to answer any queries about eligibility for the programme or potential grant projects.

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